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REMARKS MADE BY THE AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, HIS EXCELLENCY GEORGE S. MESSERSMITH, AT THE DEDICATION OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AVENUE IN THE CITY OF MEXICO ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1942.

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Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen:

In taking part in this impressive civic ceremony I do so with genuine emotion and with a feeling of gratitude which I should like to express to the distinguished persons responsible for this gracious gesture toward my country. This act is a further demonstration of Mexico's vigorous spirit of continental solidarity which has been such an important factor in recent years.

The name of Benjamin Franklin which so courteously has been given to this important avenue will tend to keep alive the memory of a citizen whose prestige transcended the frontier of his native country. From many points of view he was an illustrious citizen of the new world and I believe that we can all have a feeling of satisfaction that our continent, free and sovereign, can produce men whose exemplary lives are dedicated to science and to the improvement of the human race. In other continents there exists what amounts to a cult of warriors or of men of might but here in this hemisphere we happily are able to appreciate men of peace who are genuine benefactors of humanity.

In my opinion, Benjamin Franklin is the perfect type of the honest and strong man of the new world: of simple manners, without pretension, but resourceful and profound, and a scientist animated by noble ideals. Franklin is an attractive personality and of exemplary usefulness, perhaps particularly valued in Mexico where the talent ~~xxxx~~ for invention is so highly developed. This talent is of the greatest importance in the world today and I have complete faith that it will undoubtedly contribute substantially to the winning of the colossal struggle which is now in progress.

From other points of view Franklin synthesizes the spirit of the new world. He was one of a family of 10 children and his father was a modest soap maker. Benjamin had to leave school at the age of 10 and from then on was forced to earn his own living. The fact that by his own efforts he was able to become one of the most distinguished and celebrated men of his time, not only in America but also in Europe, constitutes an eloquent testimonial of the strength of a system which permits men to develop freely and to receive their just rewards.

Franklin struggled persistently for his country's liberty despite the fact that his efforts for that noble cause cost him dearly. He was stripped of his property, he was the victim of savage attacks against his integrity and he was obliged to live apart from his family. Despite his advanced age and the tremendous difficulties which prevailed

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prevailed at that time in crossing the Atlantic he made several trips to France where he worked ceaselessly for the cause of liberty making use of his shrewd intelligence and his attractive personality so esteemed in France which adopted the policy of extending aid to the Colonies in their just struggle.

In addition to his great civic contributions to his country Franklin achieved great renown as a journalist and writer; he organized the best printing house of his day and published a weekly magazine which had large social and political influence. In 1744 he published the first novel to be issued in the United States. His inexhaustible energy enabled him to find time to carry out scientific studies on subjects as diverse as earthquakes, tropical diseases, lightening and other geological phenomena. His studies on electricity were especially valuable and some of the discoveries he made in that connection are still valid. He was much interested in the study of living languages and he attained a knowledge of Spanish, Italian and French.

In these difficult times when the free world is struggling to maintain its traditions of liberty and humanity, it is especially heartening to participate in a ceremony such as this, to render homage to one of the founders of my country who two centuries ago struggled resolutely for the same ideals which we are today defending. I am sure that the United Nations will triumph in the present struggle no matter how difficult it may be and in the same way in which our ancestors triumphed in their struggles for liberty. The example of our great men constitutes a noble stimulus and gives us the courage, patience and iron will which we need to triumph in this bitter struggle.

In conclusion, allow me once again to repeat in the name of the people of the United States of America my deep gratitude for this gracious and generous gesture of friendship which the City of Mexico had made toward a distinguished representative of my country.

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